

CIA 8-02

*Rev. Russell, Ricka*

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| ANDERSON, S. C. |          |            |
| INDEPENDENT     |          |            |
| M.              | 54,890   |            |
| S.              | 55,101   |            |
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## "Watchdog" Group Performs Vital Service To CIA As Well As Public

Last March Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright wrote to a Democratic colleague, Sen. Richard B. Russell, distinguished chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, and observed what only the utterly unobservant could have failed to notice, i.e., that the Central Intelligence Agency's activities have a profound effect on America's foreign relations.

Such being the case, "I wonder," the Arkansas Democrat wrote, "what you think of informally adding members of the Foreign Relations Committee" to the CIA "watch-dog" sub-committee, which is made up of Armed Services and Appropriations Committee members and is headed by the distinguished senator from Alabama.

Senator Russell thought poorly of the idea. He said he could see no reason why the Foreign Relations Committee should "muscle in" to someone else's territory. So Senator Fulbright and like-minded members brought a resolution to expand the "watchdog" panel

to the Senate floor, where, after an unusual secret session, they were decisively defeated, 61-28.

But that did not end the matter. The controversy continued as to whether Congress is providing sufficient "legislative oversight" for the CIA "spooks." The Senate had voted as it did in large part because of the members' natural reluctance to overrule a respected senior chairman and especially one so respected as Senator Russell.

And now the able Georgia Democrat has given another indication of why he is held in such general esteem. Without being pressured, he has invited Senator Fulbright and two of his Foreign Relations Committee colleagues to attend closed sessions of the CIA "Watchdog" Committee, and he says he intends to continue to invite them to all the meetings, at least during this session of Congress.

One may argue that an official change might have been for the better, but one may also argue that it is, after all, results that count. The CIA is, by law and by the nature of its responsibilities a secret agency. But Congress, under the Constitution, has its own responsibilities. The additional surveillance should be useful both to the CIA and to Congress—and to the public.